

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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Strength and Programs.

1. The Algerian Communist Party (ACP) has two deputies in the French National Assembly, Pierre Fayet and Alice Sportisse, and one delegate to the Algerian Assembly, Rene Justabo. In recent years, the Communists have failed to gain increased political representation but there is no indication that they have let up on their propaganda campaign and possible clandestine activities. The Party largely dominates the dockworkers and railway workers through the activity of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) Union.
2. The ACP Secretariat consists of a small handful of the select, particularly Larbi Bouhali, Paul Caballero, Bachir Hadj Ali, Younes Kouch and Andre Moine. In broad outlines, the ACP program includes the following:
 - a. Collaboration with the nationalists, with the eventual aim of complete domination.
 - b. Following the Moscow line on plans for "peace."
 - c. Continued demand for separation of Church and State in order to secure nationalist support, particularly that of the Oulems.
 - d. Agitation for and support of dock strikes and strikes in the field of transportation and agriculture, whether for the benefit of the worker or not.
 - e. Regular condemnation of Government interference with elections.
 - f. Condemnation of the Atlantic Pact and American bases in Europe.
 - g. Continued stressing of the peaceful aims of the Soviet Union.

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- h. Continued denunciation of the wars in Korea and Viet Nam as wars of imperialism.
 - i. Continued strengthening of front organizations for mass action in the event of revolution.
3. The ACP has at its command several front organizations in Algeria among which are the Association Algerienne des Amis de l'URSS and the Union des Femmes d'Algérie. Alice Sportisse is a member of the directorate of the latter organization, and Lucette Manaranche and Baya Allouchiche are its secretaries. The Union sent a letter of the Front Algérien pour la Défense et le Respect de la Liberté (FADRL) at the time of its creation to the effect that the Party would respond to the FADRL appeal and would resolutely sustain its action.
 4. The ACP publishes two local newspapers, Liberté, a weekly, and Alger Républicain, a daily, which interpret the Party line for the faithful. During times of emotional stress (some issue around which the Party can build an appeal for greater sales), the newspapers sell as many as 15,000 to 18,000 copies. While this is not a safe rule on which to gauge Party strength, it offers a basis for estimate.¹ This means that the number of hard core or staunch Party members is much smaller. In the elections of June 1951, for the National Assembly, the Communists drew about 32,000 votes. Later, in local contests, the figure was reduced to half. If the Government continues to exercise a firm hand to control Communist activities, the Party will not appear as a threat to national stability.
- Native and European Membership.
5. It is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to the actual strength of the Communist Party in Algiers. It is made more difficult by the fantastic claims of Party organizers where there is a drive for Party membership. For instance, a meeting is organized for the purpose of advocating world peace or to offer a protest to the Government against the arrest of ACP members. Those who attend and sign, or indicate their willingness to sign by affixing an "X", will be classified as Party members. Some may be recruited but the majority will never pay dues, attend meetings or carry out Party directives.
 6. From time to time, protest meetings are held in Algiers in a downtown theater. Only a handful of CP members are involved but free tickets are distributed all over the City so that two or three hundred people attend. This meeting is then portrayed as a mass protest against whatever the CP objective is. Actually, the majority of those attending have no idea as to what it is all about.
 7. The present CP policy seems to be to give the natives the greater number of responsible positions within the Party but to retain the control within the European members who, in turn, receive their directives from the next higher echelon. One of the primary reasons for this is that, if the occasion should arise, a "spontaneous" local uprising could be assured.
- Outside Support.
8. Support and direction come from the CP in France, through the Party and through the Party-dominated CGT labor unions.
 9. Leon Feix, a member of the Central Committee of the French CP, presided over the meeting of the Central Committee of the ACP in Algiers on 17-18 January 1953.
 10. Financial support from outside Algeria is one of the Party's most closely guarded secrets. However, it is supposed to exist because Party dues and worker contributions could not keep the Party alive.

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Communist Infiltration of the Nationalist Movement.

11. On 25 July and 5 August 1951, the Algerian CP realized one of the goals for which it had worked since 1946: the creation of a common or united front between it and the nationalist elements. These nationalist elements were the Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien (UDMA), and the Association des Oulemas. Political observers have proclaimed for years the impossibility of such a front because of the Moslem religion. It is, perhaps, a "marriage of convenience" because, next to national independence, the separation of Cult and State is the primary objective of the nationalists and, particularly, the Oulemas. Without this provision, it does not seem likely that the nationalists would have agreed to enter such a union.
12. The "front" has a permanent secretariat of ten members who are representatives of the above groups.
13. After the original meeting of the initiative committee on 5 July, the constitutive assembly met 5 August 1951, to complete the task of organization. This assembly was controlled by the following:

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| Cheikh Larbi Tebessi | - presided over the assembly |
| Ahmed Boumendjel | - UDMA |
| Cheikh Kherredine | - Oulemas |
| Ahmed Francis | - UDMA |
| Ahmed Mezerna | - MFLD |
| Abderrahmane Khouane | - MFLD |
| Mustapha Ferroukhi | - MFLD |
| Larbi Bouhalli | - ACP |
| Paul Caballero | - ACP |
| Ahmed Mahmoudi | - ACP |
| Andre Ruiz | - ACP |
| Ahmed Toufik el Madani | - Independents |
| Djamal Sfindja | - Independents |
14. The ACP has made it quite clear that it would not be bound by any action of the other components of the "front" which might conflict with the Moscow line. Action committees, consisting largely of previous committees, were created throughout Algeria to act in the name of the FADRL in making protests, etc.
15. The UDMA, MFLD and Association des Oulemas benefited in their union with the Communists by securing space in the Communist papers Liberté and Alger Républicain. They control no newspapers of their own. The conservative press, to a great extent, ignores political questions dealing with nationalist affairs, and, therefore, is not interested in publishing appeals for national independence. The nationalists of Algeria will accept help from anyone. Relatively few nationalists, however, are true Communists and only a small number, proportionately, are Communist sympathizers. Their attitude is that if one is engaged in a struggle and is offered help, even though the help is objectionable, it would be foolish not to accept the offer at least, until the struggle is won.
16. In the obvious lack of cooperation from the nationalists, the frantic appeal of the Communists to revive the front and their requests to the nationalists to join forces in elections, etc., the Communists have, thus far, significantly failed in their attempted penetration and control the nationalist movement.
17. The ACP makes a studied effort to appear as the champion of the underprivileged: to the Oulemas, it offers itself as a champion of religious freedom; to the unskilled laborer, a champion for better wages; and to the civil servant, a fighter for increased retirement and other benefits. The Party declares itself as all things to all men.

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Communist Influence in Labor Unions.

18. To understand Communist influence and control of certain Algerian labor unions, it is necessary to review the background of the rise of trade unions in Algeria. Their origin, locally, has been entirely French. Before World War II, there were only two groups: The CGT and the Catholic Servants. Under the Vichy regime, they disappeared. Trade unions were reconstituted only after the Allied landings in Algeria, at which time, a group of Communists, who had been imprisoned at Maison Carrée, were released. Their activities in the labor movement contributed materially towards fostering the Communist line. There was little opposition to their progress because no one recognized the special method of infiltration into labor unions which they employed.
19. Four unions, patterned after those in France, now exist in Algeria. They are: 1) the Communist-led CGT; 2) the Force Ouvrière (FO); 3) the Catholic Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC); and 4) the Independents. The latter consists largely of newspapermen, teachers and police officers. The CFTC has endeavored to extend its influence but has made only nominal progress. It does, however, have some support among bank employees of Algiers, Oran and Constantine.
20. The FO had a difficult start in 1947 as a new movement opposed to the CGT. Although officially apolitical, the FO has a background of the Socialist Party, SFIO. Leading union figures usually join this party. The FO is stronger in the SFIO strongholds of Oran, Tlemcen, Perregaux and Beni-Saf.
21. The CGT unions, which are by far the strongest, have a distinct advantage over the CFTC and FO unions because of: 1) their financial situation, although member contributions are low and sometimes non-existent, and 2) their position vis-a-vis the nationalist Moslem population. A French Communist worker is compelled by the Party line to look favorably upon Moslems. Because of this, CGT unions have an easier approach to Arab workers than do the other unions. This is particularly true of the dockers and tram workers of Algiers, Oran and Constantine. In Algiers, the tramwaymen, mostly of Kayble origin, are 80 percent politically allied to the MRLD but their union is affiliated with the CGT.
22. It is difficult to arrive at a reliable figure of present trade union strength. Member cards are not issued by the professional or industrial union but are "sold" on a yearly basis to the member unions by the Confederation itself. The migratory tendency of the average Arab worker also magnifies the task of arriving at a figure. Out of a labor force of roughly one and one-half million, there are believed to be less than one hundred thousand affiliated with the unions mentioned above.
23. In the conduct of union activity, there is very little collective bargaining in the usual sense of the word. Members adhere to the union more in the belief that some able leader will be able to "arrange things" than for the purpose of collective agreements. Strikes seldom occur in private business but are more frequent in public services or nationalized plants. Political strikes, called by the CGT, are on the decline. From time to time, the CGT dockers union will insist on a strike in protest of shipment of war materials to Indochina but they are usually failures because of the adequate supply of casual labor which the CGT has not yet been able to organize.
24. The Civil Servant unions are more important in Algeria than those in private industry. The nationalized services, whose employees are considered civil servants, include: tramways, railways, coal-gas and electric supplies (Electricité et Gaz d'Algérie - EGA) and the Military Air Force plants at El Aiah. Post office workers usually adhere to the CGT in Algiers. The weight of civil servants among all unions is tipped in favor of the European element, especially in the FO. Foreign workers are not allowed by law to hold union offices of any kind.

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25. The Communist-dominated CGT controls the unions of the following services: ports and docks, railways, transports, education, public services (hospitals), electricity and gas.
 26. The CGT claims widespread recruitment among agricultural workers but actually little progress has been made. It is more difficult to organize the Moslem workers than the European workers because of race hatred and the minor status which the Arab worker still retains. The majority of Moslem workers is unskilled so that their pay is always lower than that of the Europeans. Some progress, however, is being made through effective measures by the Government. In Government service, there is now no difference in pay because of a worker's race or religion. In agricultural work, minimum wages are set and enforced by the Government and the employer is obliged to present wage lists to the local authorities every pay day.
 27. During the past year, there has been no appreciable increase in Party strength or in its control over the labor element through which it operates. Due to the activity of the FO and CFTC, the CGT unions have actually lost strength, which is evident by their lack of ability to call strikes at will. Their present ability to disrupt, for any length of time, the communications, the commerce and work in nationalized industries is questionable, particularly if the strike is given a political orientation which the Party is wont to inject into every strike without justification. For the past few years, there have been no protracted strikes which materially affected Algerian production or welfare. Inasmuch as this is their main avenue of approach to the masses, their strength or weakness in this field is a fairly accurate criterion by which to judge the over-all possibility of future action.
- 25X1A 1. **Comment.** In July 1952, an American journalist, in an interview with a high-level Government official of Algeria, was given the following information, by the latter, on the strength of the Communist Party in Algeria: there were no definite figures on the strength of the Communist Party in Algeria but it was his guess that the Communist hard core did not exceed 3,000, and the remaining Communist following was 30,000.

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